



Maryland Community Health System

Committee:	Senate Finance Committee
Bill Number:	Senate Bill 974 – Maryland Medical Assistance Program and Health Insurance - Nonopioid Drugs for the Treatment of Pain
Hearing Date:	February 28, 2025
Position:	Support

The Maryland Community Health System supports *Senate Bill 974 – Maryland Medical Assistance Program and Health Insurance – Nonopioid Drugs for the Treatment of Pain*. This bill requires health insurers, including Medicaid, to cover nonopioid pain drugs in a manner that is no more restrictive than the coverage of opioid pain drugs.

Maryland Community Health System is a network of federally qualified health centers providing primary, behavioral health, and dental services to underserved communities across Maryland. Opioid abuse develops in a number of ways -- one of them being the overprescription of opioids.¹ With an estimated 2,054 deaths in Maryland caused by opioid overdose in 2024², we support the required coverage of nonopioid pain prescriptions. This will give providers another tool to treat a patient with an opioid alternative, as we understand that at least one alternative has recently been approved by the Food and Drug Administration.³

We ask for a favorable report. If we can provide any further information, please contact Robyn Elliott at relliott@policypartners.net or (443) 926-3443.

¹ [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanam/article/PIIS2667-193X\(23\)00131-X/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanam/article/PIIS2667-193X(23)00131-X/fulltext)

² <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nvss/vsrr/drug-overdose-data.htm>

³ <https://www.fda.gov/news-events/press-announcements/fda-approves-novel-non-opioid-treatment-moderate-severe-acute-pain>